

To the Honourable the Legislative Assembly of Canada, in Provincial Parliament assembled:

The Petition of the undersigned Rate-payers of the Municipality of the City of Hamilton,

HUMBLY SHEWETH,—

That by the Resolutions adopted by the Railway Committee of your Honorable House, in 1849, the principle of "one Grand Trunk Line" from the Eastern to the Western extremities of the Province, with requisite subsidiary Branches, was recognised as the "Railway system of the Province."

That of this system it was provided by the Act 14 and 15 Victoria, Cap. 73, Sections 4 ~~to~~ 16, that the proposed Great Western Railway, from Burlington Bay to the Detroit River, should form the portion or continuation West from Lake Ontario.

That, under this belief, the citizens of Hamilton entered heartily into the efforts which resulted in its construction, and were the first in the Province successfully to take up and introduce Railway enterprise.

That in subsequent legislation this principle was deviated from by the granting of Charters for parallel and competing Lines, and every inducement was given to Municipalities to enter into their construction.

That whilst the effect of the construction of competing Lines was felt directly on the traffic of these Lines, the diversion of Trade from Towns and Markets already established operated most injuriously on the enterprises then in progress, and the business already in existence, and to which the Province was in a great measure indebted for its prosperous condition.

That in endeavouring to counteract this prejudicial effect, and to retain the Trade and Commerce which had found a centre or outlet at the head waters of Lake Ontario, this Municipality, with others similarly situated, was compelled to engage in the construction of further lines, as connecting links, and this at a time when, through the general inflation of prices all over the continent, the cost of these undertakings was much enhanced.

That the City of Hamilton received no assistance from the Municipal Loan Fund Act, but issued its own Debentures, in furtherance of such enterprises, to a large amount, as well as for local improvements of a very extensive nature.

That whilst the construction of the Grand Trunk Line Westward from Lake Ontario created a competition destructive of the investment of this City in the Line, till then supposed to be a part of the General Provincial scheme, the city of Hamilton, and other Municipalities along the Line, have had to bear their share of the Provincial burden created by that Grand Trunk Line, thus being compelled to assist in making good the losses sustained by a competition of the most injurious character.

That the Municipalities which have not borrowed from the Municipal Loan Fund for the furtherance of their enterprises, have now to bear their share of the burden which that fund has created, and which is now virtually assumed by the Province.

Your Petitioners are therefore constrained, most reluctantly, to bring under the consideration of your Honorable House the injurious effect which the large indebtedness incurred by Municipalities for Railway enterprises has upon the best interests of the country.

That inasmuch as a continuance of the evils which your Petitioners deplore must most seriously affect the revenue of the Province, your Petitioners would impress on your Honorable House the expediency and equity of enacting a measure of relief in the emergency, believing that a proceeding of that nature will have the effect of infusing a degree of life and energy into public and private enterprise which would soon be felt throughout the country, and amply reimburse the Provincial Treasury in the improvement of the revenue.

Your Petitioners, therefore, pray your Honorable House to pass, as early as possible, an effectual measure of relief in relation to the present indebtedness of the City of Hamilton, and of such other Municipalities as have not been already assisted by the Municipal Loan Fund, and thus also aid in bringing to completion the enterprises remaining in an unfinished state, that the country may reap the benefit of the expenditure already incurred.

And your Petitioners will ever pray.

1860



HAMILTON, 14th March, 1860.

SIR,—

I am requested by an influential Committee of the Inhabitants of this City, to transmit, for the information of the Ratepayers of your Municipality, the accompanying Petition, and to respectfully invite their co-operation, (by Petition to the Legislature) should they desire relief in their Debt for Railway purposes.

You will observe, that the Petition, while stating its own grievance, refers to, and prays relief to all of the Municipalities interested.

I have also to intimate, that it is most desirable, that Petitions should be transmitted to Quebec with the least possible delay.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obed't serv't,

To

*J. Gillison*  
The Warden  
County of Elgin }  
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